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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 9 April 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I draw your urgent attention to the dangerously rising tensions in Occupied East Jerusalem. The illegal actions and constant provocations and incitement by Israel, the occupying Power, including in particular by right-wing Israeli Government officials, extremist settlers and religious zealots, against the Palestinian people, their land and their holy places are exacerbating already-high tensions and religious sensitivities. Such actions risk further destabilization of the situation at a critical and defining moment in the political process, in which serious efforts are being exerted, including by the United States of America and other Quartet members and the League of Arab States, to salvage any remaining hope to achieve a just, lasting solution.

On Monday 7 April 2014, in yet another act of incitement and attempt to breach the sanctity of Haram al-Sharif, right-wing Deputy Speaker of the Israeli Knesset and member of the Prime Minister's party, Moshe Feiglin, again entered Haram al-Sharif under heavily armed Israeli military escort with more than 50 extremist settlers. As noted in our letters of 20 and 25 February 2014 (A/ES-10/616-S/2014/118 and A/ES-10/617-S/2014/128, respectively), Feiglin entered this holy compound on 19 February, escorted by Israeli police and declaring that "Al-Aqsa Mosque belongs to the Jews", causing anger and raising tensions among the Palestinian population. In this latest incident of provocation, while Mr. Feiglin and the settlers were present in the Al-Aqsa compound, the occupying forces imposed restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshippers to the area. Israeli occupying forces stopped Palestinian worshippers at the main entrances of the mosque and detained them until Mr. Feiglin and the settlers left.

Such provocative incidents have intensified in both frequency and aggressiveness in the recent period, aggravating sensitivities and the fragile situation on the ground. Here it should be noted that, according to the Palestinian

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non-governmental organization Wadi Hilweh Information Center — Silwan, which documents Israeli violations in the holy city, a total of about 1,250 Jewish settlers forced their way into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound last month alone. Equally disconcerting, the Internal Affairs and Environment Committee in the Israeli Knesset convened on 7 April to further discuss a resolution for "allowing" Jewish prayers in the Al-Aqsa courtyard. Such debates will not only provoke the already inflamed political climate but completely disregard the sensitive nature of Al-Aqsa Mosque, the first qiblah and the third holiest site in Islam, which remains under the supervision of the Islamic Waqf and custodianship of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the long-standing status quo in this regard.

Moreover, we must reiterate at this critical juncture that all such illegal Israeli actions at Haram al-Sharif and throughout the rest of Occupied East Jerusalem are in violation of the numerous relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions calling for a cessation of all Israeli policies and measures aimed at altering the character, legal status and demography of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and for respect by Israel, the occupying Power, of its obligations under international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits such actions.

The State of Palestine believes that all such acts of incitement at holy sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as acts of the ongoing, deliberate provocations against the Palestinian people by the occupying Power, whether they be by the Government of Israel, its occupying forces or its illegal settlers, warrant serious and immediate attention by the international community, including by the Security Council, in line with its primary Charter duty for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is clear that such provocations and incitement are clearly aimed at illegally and forcibly further entrenching Israeli control over Haram al-Sharif in Occupied East Jerusalem and they must be rejected unequivocally.

Furthermore, we must draw attention to Israel's continued pursuit of its reckless and illegal settlement enterprise, which, in addition to the unabated construction of settlements, includes the destruction and confiscation of Palestinian lands and properties, as well as the forced displacement of Palestinian families. The persistence of such illegal actions sabotaged the latest round of peace talks and continues to threaten to physically destroy the possibility of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. Last week, as the United States Secretary of State, John Kerry, was shuttling between the two sides to address the crisis in the negotiations owing to Israel's reneging on the prisoner release, the Israeli Minister of Housing and Construction, Uri Ariel, himself a settler, signed tenders for 708 new settlement units in the so-called settlement of "Gilo" in Occupied East Jerusalem. This flagrant, deliberate act of provocation only served to further inflame the situation and to reaffirm Israel's bad faith in the peace process.

We call on the international community to act with urgency and responsibility to ensure the de-escalation of this perilous situation in the Occupied State of Palestine and to salvage the prospects for the realization of a peaceful, negotiated solution. Pressure must be brought to bear to bring a halt to the occupying Power's violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, as well as its provocations and incitement against the Palestinian people and their holy sites, including in Occupied East Jerusalem. The international community, if truly

interested in peace and saving the two-State solution, must do all that is possible to support a credible, substantive peace process, and this requires a clear call on Israel to commit to the path of peace on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with the two-State solution based on the long-standing terms of reference. For peace to truly have a chance, this is the time for the international community, and foremost the Security Council, to act collectively to hold Israel accountable for its violations and crimes and reject its empty pretexts, deception and disdain for international law.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 491 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 24 March 2014 (A/ES-10/622-S/2014/214) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations